

# **POLICY BULLETIN CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS**

**NSLP 04-08**

**February 13, 2008**

**SUBJECT: Eligibility for School Meals Manual**

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Enclosed is a new interim edition of the Eligibility for School Meals Manual. This version replaces the August 2001 edition. It is available on the web at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/notices/iegs/EligibilityManual.pdf>

The federal government's intention is to make use of the advantages of a web-based publication and update the manual periodically. If you have comments regarding the guidance, send them to us and we will compile and forward them to our regional office.

We have noted several areas where this manual seems to be *different* from the guidance previously issued and we are seeking further clarification. Those issues include:

Pg. 15 "Allows" up to 30 operating days carryover of prior year eligibility; however, pg. 16 "requires" 30 days.

Pg. 16 "Case number" (singular) for the children versus Pg. 40 "and provide case numbers" (plural)

Pg. 19 Requires each household member who does not have income must have a "zero" indicated on the application or check the "no income" box.

Pg. 22, Part J These applications *are* excluded from verification (typo reads "should are")

Pg. 24 Requires the LEA to maintain the date of the transfer on the application

Pg. 27, Q6 contradicts FSMC Guidance for SFAs, pg 3-3

Pg. 27, Q1 reports no social security number is required on an income application for an emancipated child which contradicts prior regulation

Pg. 68 uses inconsistent verification sample size labels. "Standard Sample Size" should be labeled "Basic 3%," "Alternate Sample Size one" should be labeled "Alternate 3%," and "Alternate two" should be labeled "Alternate 1% Plus."

Pg. 71 should note if the families' eligibility for benefits is reduced, they must receive a 10 calendar day notice and the right to appeal.

Pg. 75 says when a "household indicates verbally or in writing that it no longer wishes to receive free or reduced-price benefits, verification is considered complete when the notice of adverse action is sent." This says a verbal indication from the family is sufficient and considered a response to verification, which contradicts prior guidance (but it is welcomed because often families are resistant to submit pay stubs when they know they no longer qualify for benefits).

Pg. 77 indicates the reduction or termination of benefits "must take place no later than 10 operating days after the 10 calendar day advance notice period." This seems to indicate a reduction of benefits may take up to 20 days.